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Rosalynn Carter, outspoken former first lady, dead at 96



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Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter listens to a speaker at The Carter Center in Atlanta on April 6, 2011.

Associated Press

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K-12 schools improve protection against online attacks, but many are vulnerable to ransomware gangs

By **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some K-12 public schools are racing to improve protection against the threat of online attacks, but lax cybersecurity means thousands of others are vulnerable to ransomware gangs that can steal confidential data and disrupt operations. Since a White House conference in August on ransomware threats, dozens of school districts have signed up for free cybersecurity services, and federal officials have hosted exercises with schools to help them learn how to better secure their networks, said Anne Neuberger, the Biden's administration's deputy national security advisor for

cyber and emerging technology.

Neuberger said more districts need to take advantage of programs available that would better guard against online attackers who are increasingly targeting schools. Their aim is to lock up computer systems, and in some cases, steal and publish sensitive personal information if a ransom is not paid.

"Compromises happens again and again, often in the same way, and there are defenses to protect against it. And here the government has really brought companies together, brought agencies together to deploy some of those," Neuberger said in an interview. "Don't give



Anne Neuberger, Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technology, speaks during a news briefing at the White House, Monday, March 21, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

up. Reach out and sign up. And your kids will be a lot safer online." The administration announced steps over the

summer to help cash-strapped schools, which have been slow to build up cybersecurity defenses. Ransomware attackers, many of whom are based in Russia, have not only forced schools to temporarily close but have exposed a wealth of students' private information. Last month, parents sued the Clark County School District in Nevada, alleging a ransomware attack led to the release of highly sensitive information about teachers, students and their families in the country's fifth largest school district. In another high-profile case this year, hackers broke into the Minneapolis Public Schools system and dumped sexual assault case records and other sensitive files online after the district refused to pay a \$1 million ransom. More than 9,000 small public school districts across the United States with up to 2,500 students — that's roughly 70 percent of public districts in the country — are now eligible for free cybersecurity services from web security company Cloudflare through a new program called Proj-

ect Cybersafe Schools, Neuberger said. Since August, roughly 140 districts in 32 states have signed up for the program, which provides free email security and other online threat protection, she said.

James Hatz, technology coordinator for Rush City Public Schools in Minnesota, said the program arrived just in time for their district, quickly stopping 100 suspicious emails from getting to staff. Hatz said cybercriminals often try to get teachers to click on malicious links by pretending to be an administrator sharing documents about things such as pay raises.

"We are not going to be bulletproof, but the more we can do to make it harder, the better between user training, this program and everything else," Hatz said. Neuberger also said a \$20 million grant program from Amazon Web Services that is designed to help schools improve their cybersecurity has received about 130 applications.

The Federal Communications Commission has also proposed a pilot program that would make up to \$200 million available over three years to strengthen cyber defense in schools and libraries. Neuberger said the hope is that money will be available to schools in the "near future."

But Doug Levin, director of the K12 Security Information eXchange, a Virginia-based nonprofit that helps schools defend against cybersecurity risk, said he fears attacks against schools are going to continue to grow both in frequency and severity without more federal support and requirements that schools have baseline cybersecurity controls. □



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Rosalynn Carter, outspoken former first lady, dead at 96

By BILL BARROW and MICHAEL WARREN
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Former first lady Rosalynn Carter, the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as U.S. president and their four decades thereafter as global humanitarians, has died at the age of 96.

The Carter Center said she died Sunday after living with dementia and suffering many months of declining health. The statement announcing her death said she “died peacefully, with family by her side” at 2:10 p.m. at her rural Georgia home of Plains.

“Rosalynn was my equal partner in everything I ever accomplished,” Carter said in the statement. “She gave me wise guidance and encouragement when I needed it. As long as Rosalynn was in the world, I always knew somebody loved and supported me.” The Carters were married for more than 77 years, forging what they both described as a “full partnership.” Unlike many previous first ladies, Rosalynn sat in on Cabinet meetings, spoke out on controversial issues and represented her husband on foreign trips. Aides to President Carter sometimes referred to her — privately — as “co-president.”

“Rosalynn is my best friend ... the perfect extension of me, probably the most influential person in my life,” Jimmy Carter told aides during their White House years, which spanned from 1977-1981.

Fiercely loyal and compassionate as well as politically astute, Rosalynn Carter prided herself on being an activist first lady, and no one doubted her behind-the-scenes influence. When her role in a highly publicized Cabinet shakeup became known, she was forced to declare publicly, “I am not running the government.”

Many presidential aides insisted that her political instincts were better than her husband’s — they often enlisted her support for a project before they discussed it



Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, former first lady Rosalynn Carter, sit together during a reception to celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary, July 10, 2021, in Plains, Ga.

Associated Press

with the president. Her iron will, contrasted with her outwardly shy demeanor and a soft Southern accent, inspired Washington reporters to call her “the Steel Magnolia.”

Both Carters said in their later years that Rosalynn had always been the more political of the two. After Jimmy Carter’s landslide defeat in 1980, it was she, not the former president, who contemplated an implausible comeback, and years later she confessed to missing their life in Washington.

Jimmy Carter trusted her so much that in 1977, only months into his term, he sent her on a mission to Latin America to tell dictators he meant what he said about denying military aid and other support to violators of human rights.

She also had strong feelings about the style of the Carter White House. The Carters did not serve hard liquor at public functions, though Rosalynn did permit U.S. wine. There were fewer evenings of ballroom dancing and more square dancing and picnics.

Throughout her husband’s political career, she chose mental health and problems of the elderly as her signature policy emphasis. When the news media didn’t cover those efforts

as much as she believed was warranted, she criticized reporters for writing only about “sexy subjects.” As honorary chairwoman of the President’s Commission on Mental Health, she once testified before a Senate subcommittee, becoming the first first lady since Eleanor Roosevelt to address a congressional panel. She was back in Washington in 2007 to push Congress for improved mental health coverage, saying, “We’ve been working on this for so long, it finally seems to be in reach.”

She said she developed her interest in mental health during her husband’s campaigns for Georgia governor.

“I used to come home and say to Jimmy, ‘Why are people telling me their problems?’ And he said, ‘Because you may be the only person they’ll ever see who may be close to someone who can help them,’” she explained.

After Ronald Reagan won the 1980 election, Rosalynn Carter seemed more visibly devastated than her husband. She initially had little interest in returning to the small town of Plains, Georgia, where they both were born, married and spent most of their lives.

“I was hesitant, not at all sure that I could be happy

here after the dazzle of the White House and the years of stimulating political battles,” she wrote in her 1984 autobiography, “First Lady from Plains.” But “we slowly rediscovered the satisfaction of a life we had left long before.”

After leaving Washington, Jimmy and Rosalynn co-founded The Carter Center in Atlanta to continue their work. She chaired the center’s annual symposium on mental health issues and raised funds for efforts to aid the mentally ill and homeless. She also wrote “Helping Yourself Help Others,” about the challenges of caring for elderly or ailing relatives, and a sequel, “Helping Someone With Mental Illness.”

Frequently, the Carters left home on humanitarian missions, building houses with Habitat for Humanity and promoting public health and democracy across the developing world.

“I get tired,” she said of her travels. “But something so wonderful always happens. To go to a village where they have Guinea worm and go back a year or two later and there’s no Guinea worm, I mean the people dance and sing — it’s so wonderful.”

In 2015, Jimmy Carter’s doctors discovered four small tumors on his brain.

The Carters feared he had weeks to live. He was treated with a drug to boost his immune system, and later announced that doctors found no remaining signs of cancer. But when they first received the news, she said she didn’t know what she was going to do.

“I depend on him when I have questions, when I’m writing speeches, anything, I consult with him,” she said. She helped Carter recover several years later when he had hip replacement surgery at age 94 and had to learn to walk again. And she was with him earlier this year when he decided after a series of hospital stays that he would forgo further medical interventions and begin end-of-life care.

Jimmy Carter is the longest-lived U.S. president. Rosalynn Carter was the second longest-lived of the nation’s first ladies, trailing only Bess Truman, who died at age 97.

Eleanor Rosalynn Smith was born in Plains on Aug. 18, 1927, the eldest of four children. Her father died when she was young, so she took on much of the responsibility of caring for her siblings when her mother went to work part time.

She also contributed to the family income by working after school in a beauty parlor. “We were very poor and worked hard,” she once said, but she kept up her studies, graduating from high school as class valedictorian.

She soon fell in love with the brother of one of her best friends. Jimmy and Rosalynn had known each other all their lives — it was Jimmy’s mother, nurse Lillian Carter, who delivered baby Rosalynn — but he left for the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, when she was still in high school.

After a blind date, Jimmy told his mother: “That’s the girl I want to marry.” They wed in 1946, shortly after his graduation from Annapolis and Rosalynn’s graduation from Georgia Southwestern College. □

Maine and Massachusetts are the last states to keep bans on Sunday hunting

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) —

Some states are steadily chipping away at long-standing bans on Sunday hunting, and there's a push to overturn the laws in Maine and Massachusetts, the final two states with full bans.

Maine's highest court is considering a lawsuit asking whether the state's 19th century law, which prevents hunting big game animals such as deer, moose and turkeys on Sundays, is still necessary. In Massachusetts, where hunters are also lobbying for Sunday hunting rights, there is a renewed effort to change state laws forbidding the practice.

Forty states have no prohibitions on hunting on Sundays.

The bans stem from so-called "blue laws" that also regulate which businesses can remain open and where alcohol can be sold on Sundays.

Animal welfare groups, conservation organizations and others are rallying to defend the prohibitions, but the end of the laws might be in sight. Other states such as Virginia and



Jared Bornstein aims his rifle while deer hunting Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023, in Turner, Maine

Associated Press

South Carolina have in recent years rolled back what remains of their own limitations on the Sunday hunt.

Residents of states where hunting is part of the culture are divided on the subject. Some hunters argue the laws protect private landowner rights, while others say the rules take away hunting opportunities — or are just plain silly.

Sportsmen who oppose the laws see them as a vestige of the blue laws dating to the 17th century and limiting what activities citizens can engage in on a day governments once dedicated to prayer.

Jared Bornstein, executive director of Maine Hunters

United for Sunday Hunting, said allowing seven-day-a-week hunting would allow people the opportunity to harvest their own food in a state with many poor, rural communities that cannot afford soaring grocery costs.

"I'm not saying that Sunday hunting is going to save the world economically, but I'm saying for a group of people, there's more of an objective benefit to it," Bornstein said. "It's a generation's last vestigial attempt to control the working class."

The states that still have full or partial bans on Sunday hunting are all on the East Coast, where every fall sportsmen pursue wild tur-

keys and white-tailed deer with firearms and archery. Last year, South Carolina opened limited hunting on public lands on Sundays, and the year before that Virginia made a similar move.

A few years prior North Carolina began to allow Sunday hunting on some 75% of its public hunting land, according to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. Laws were also loosened in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Delaware in the past five years.

Maine's ongoing court case, which could legalize Sunday hunting, concerns a couple who filed a lawsuit stating the "right to food" amendment in the state's Constitution, the first of its kind in the U.S., should allow them to hunt on any day of the week. The Maine Supreme Judicial Court has heard arguments in the case, but it's unclear when it will rule, said Andy Schmidt, an attorney for the couple. The state first banned Sunday hunting in 1883.

In Massachusetts, where some sources date the ban all the way back to the Puritan era, a campaign to repeal it made progress

before stalling in the state Legislature in 2014. Some are continuing to try to strike the law, which is "discriminating against hunters," said John Kellstrand, president of the Mass Sportsmen's Council. A new proposal to authorize Sunday hunting via bow and arrows was introduced earlier this year.

The efforts to roll back Sunday hunting up and down the East Coast face opposition from a broad range of interest groups, including animal protection advocates, state wildlife management authorities and private landowners.

Maine Woodland Owners, a group representing rural landowners in the most forested state in the country, sees the Sunday hunting ban as critical to keeping private lands open for hunting access on the other days of the week, Executive Director Tom Doak said.

"We're not asking for money. We're not saying pay us. We're not asking for anything but to be left alone one day a week," Doak said. "They will close their lands. They absolutely will do that." □

Investigators probe for motive behind shooting at New Hampshire psychiatric hospital

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Investigators in New Hampshire were probing for answers Sunday as to why a man shot a security guard to death at a New Hampshire psychiatric hospital moments before being killed by a state police trooper.

New Hampshire Attorney General John Formella said Saturday that 33-year-old John Madore entered New Hampshire Hospital on Friday afternoon and killed Bradley Haas, a state Department of Safety security officer who was working at the front lobby entrance of the facility.

Michael Garrity, a spokesperson for the attorney

general's office, said Sunday that the investigation into the shooting "is active and ongoing."

Autopsies determined that the cause of death for both Haas and Madore was multiple gunshot wounds, according to Formella's office.

In 2016, Madore faced assault charges that were later dismissed, according to a court summary of the case. The summary, without elaborating, indicates that a judge had ordered Madore to be transported from New Hampshire Hospital for a court hearing.

Madore was most recently living in a hotel in the Seacoast region and also had



State police and an FBI bomb technician stand at a staging area in the parking lot of New Hampshire Hospital Friday, Nov. 17, 2023, in Concord, N.H.

Associated Press

lived in Concord, according to Formella. He was wielding a 9mm pistol and had additional ammunition on him when he shot Haas,

who was unarmed. Police also found an AR-style rifle, a tactical vest and several ammunition magazines in a U-Haul truck

in the hospital's parking lot and were investigating connections between the truck and Madore.

The shooting happened around 3:30 p.m. and was contained to the front lobby of the 185-bed facility, according to investigators. CPR was performed on Haas, who later died at Concord Hospital.

On the day of the shooting, there were 152 patient beds occupied at the hospital according to a daily patient census report by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. The facility is the only state-run psychiatric hospital for adults in New Hampshire. □

Ahead of Dutch elections, food banks highlight the cost-of-living crisis, a major campaign theme

By **MIKE CORDER**
Associated Press

VOORBURG, Netherlands

(AP) — Cans of fish, jars of pasta sauce and bags of beans are stacked in blue crates. Meat, dairy and bread are kept cold in a huge freezer and a walk-in refrigerator in this affluent Dutch town. The supplies are on hand to feed the new poor in one of the richest nations in the world.

Needy families are lining up for free handouts at food banks across the Netherlands, underscoring how poverty is taking root even in lower middle-class families and why tackling it has become a major theme in next Wednesday's parliamentary election.

If it gets any worse, "then it really becomes a scandal for society," said Rob Kuipers, a 70-year-old retired senior civil servant who is the chairman of the local food bank in Leidschendam-Voorburg, within easy cycling distance of the parliament in The Hague.

The cost-of-living crisis, a chronic shortage of social and affordable housing and limits on access to affordable healthcare have combined to become known by the catch-all title



Rob Kuipers, a 70-year-old retired senior civil servant who is the chairman of the local food bank in Leidschendam-Voorburg, within easy cycling distance of the parliament in The Hague, talks with the Associated Press, Friday, Nov. 17, 2023.

Associated Press

"security of existence" in election campaigning and it's a topic all parties are addressing in their election programs.

"We, for a long time, had people living in poverty but this was always, relatively speaking, a smaller group and a quite marginal group and now this has spread to the lower middle class. And that, I think, is the reason why we are talking so much about it now," said Maurice Crul, a professor of sociology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

"This was always a topic that the progressive or the left-wing parties put on the agenda," he added. "But now you see that also populist right wing parties and the middle party is put-

ting this on the agenda big time, too."

That centrist "middle party" is personified by Pieter Omtzigt, a former Christian Democrat who set up the New Social Contract over the summer. It is already polling so high that he will play a key role in coalition talks once the votes have been counted.

After years campaigning on behalf of marginalized members of society and uncovering government scandals, tackling poverty is one of his two main campaign themes.

"There is a long list of things we need to do to challenge that cost-of-living crisis," he told reporters at a campaign event. "We will make the primary neces-

sities of life affordable," his party's manifesto says, with measures including reforming taxation and welfare rules to give people more disposable income.

The center-right People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, or VVD, of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte — traditionally seen as a party for the wealthy and a supporter of the free-market economy — is also pledging to help.

"To make sure people who work full-time can make ends meet, we will raise the minimum wage," the party's manifesto pledges. "To tackle childhood poverty, we will give targeted support to families with children."

Underscoring how the issue cuts across traditional party lines, a center-left two-party bloc led by former European Union climate chief Frans Timmermans proposes some of the same solutions. It advocates raising the Dutch minimum wage to 16 euros (\$17.40) per hour. For employees aged over 21 years, the current minimum is 12.79 euros for a 36-hour work week.

For some workers and for others living on welfare benefits, that is not enough.

The national umbrella organization for 176 Dutch food banks says that they serve a total of 38,000 households — 100,000 people — each week and that 1.2 million people live below the poverty line. The number is down slightly from a year ago when inflation was soaring in the Netherlands and across the world. Just 18 months ago, the food bank in Leidschendam-Voorburg, a municipality of some 78,000 people that recently ranked fifth in a survey of the most "livable" towns in the Netherlands, had 140 clients. That shot up to 250 as a cost-of-living crisis swept across the world and did not spare the wealthy Netherlands. Those 250 households amount to up to 700 people, Kuipers said. The true number of people on the breadline may be much higher. The Leidschendam-Voorburg food bank Kuipers oversees estimates that the true number of people eligible for food aid could be two to three times higher.

Now he is waiting to see how the election plays out and the new constellation of parties joining forces to run the country. □

U.S. calls Nicaragua's decision to leave Organization of American States a 'step away from democracy'

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The U.S. State Department called Nicaragua's formal withdrawal from the Organization of American States on Sunday "another step away from democracy."

The regional body, known by its initials OAS, has long criticized rights violations under Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. Ortega, who governs alongside his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, has rejected those criticisms and started the two-year process to leave the OAS in November 2021.

"The Ortega/Murillo regime's withdrawal from the OAS is another step away from democracy and fur-

ther isolates Nicaragua from the international community," U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller wrote on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

Neither Ortega's office nor the government commented Sunday.

The OAS has said it will continue closely monitoring Nicaragua's democracy and human rights record even after the country's exit from the group, which it has belonged to since 1950.

According to a resolution approved by the OAS permanent council earlier this month, the OAS "will continue paying special attention to the situation in



Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, lead a rally in Managua, Nicaragua, Sept. 6, 2018.

Associated Press

Nicaragua" and will try to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms there.

Arturo McFields, Nicaragua's representative at the

OAS until he publicly denounced Ortega and Murillo in 2022, said earlier this month that Nicaragua's withdrawal would be "a heavy blow to the fight for

democracy and defense of human rights." But he was encouraged by the OAS resolution.

Ortega's administration has sought to suppress critical voices since popular street protests in April 2018 turned into a referendum on his government. After the protests were violently put down, with some 355 people killed and hundreds imprisoned, the government set about silencing institutions he perceived as supporting the protesters.

Targets have included private universities, the Roman Catholic Church, civil society organizations and tens of thousands of individuals driven into exile. □

Yemen's Houthi rebels hijack an Israeli-linked ship in the Red Sea and take 25 crew members hostage

By ISABEL DEBRE and JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Yemen's Houthi rebels seized an Israeli-linked cargo ship in a crucial Red Sea shipping route on Sunday, officials said, taking over two dozen crew members hostage and raising fears that regional tensions heightened over the Israel-Hamas war were playing out on a new maritime front.

The Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they hijacked the ship over its connection to Israel and took the crew as hostages. The group warned that it would continue to target ships in international waters that were linked to or owned by Israelis until the end of Israel's campaign against Gaza's Hamas rulers.

"All ships belonging to the Israeli enemy or that deal with it will become legitimate targets," the Houthis said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office had blamed the Houthis for the attack on the Bahamas-flagged *Galaxy Leader*, a vehicle carrier affiliated with an Israeli billionaire. It said the 25 crew members had a range of nationalities, including Bul-



The *Galaxy Leader* is seen at the port of Koper, Slovenia on Sept. 16, 2008.

Associated Press

garian, Filipino, Mexican and Ukrainian, but that no Israelis had been on board. The Houthis said they were treating the crew members "in accordance with their Islamic values," but did not elaborate on what that meant.

Netanyahu's office condemned the seizure as an "Iranian act of terror." The Israeli military called the hijacking a "very grave incident of global consequence."

Israeli officials insisted the ship was British-owned and Japanese-operated. However, ownership details in public shipping databases associated the ship's owners with Ray Car Carriers, which was founded by

Abraham "Rami" Ungar, who is known as one of the richest men in Israel.

Ungar told The Associated Press he was aware of the incident but couldn't comment as he awaited details. A ship linked to him experienced an explosion in 2021 in the Gulf of Oman. Israeli media blamed it on Iran at the time.

The complex world of international shipping often involves a series of management companies, flags and owners stretching across the globe in a single vessel. Two U.S. defense officials confirmed that Houthi rebels seized the *Galaxy Leader* in the Red Sea on Sunday afternoon local time. The rebels descended on

the cargo ship by repelling down from a helicopter, the officials said, confirming details first reported by NBC News. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter.

Twice in the last month, U.S. warships have intercepted missiles or drones from Yemen that were believed to be headed toward Israel or posing a threat to the American vessels. The USS *Carney*, a Navy destroyer, intercepted three land attack cruise missiles and several drones that were launched by Houthi forces toward the northern Red Sea last month.

On Nov. 15 the USS *Thomas Hudner*, another destroyer, was sailing toward the Bab-el-Mandeb strait when the crew saw a drone, reported to have originated in Yemen. The ship shot down the drone over the water. The officials said the crew took action to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel, and there were no casualties or damage to the ship. Satellite tracking data from MarineTraffic.com analyzed by the AP showed the *Galaxy Leader* traveling in the Red Sea southwest of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia,

more than a day ago. The vessel had been in Korfez, Turkey, and was on its way to Pipavav, India, at the time of the seizure reported by Israel.

It had its Automatic Identification System tracker, or AIS, switched off, the data showed. Ships are supposed to keep their AIS active for safety reasons, but crews will turn them off if it appears they might be targeted or to smuggle contraband, which there was no immediate evidence to suggest was the case with the *Galaxy Leader*.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which provides warnings to sailors in the Persian Gulf and the wider region, put the hijacking as having occurred some 150 kilometers (90 miles) off the coast of Yemen's port city of Hodeida, near the coast of Eritrea.

The Red Sea, stretching from Egypt's Suez Canal to the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait separating the Arabian Peninsula from Africa, remains a key trade route for global shipping and energy supplies. That's why the U.S. Navy has stationed multiple ships in the sea since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7. □

A volcano may keep residents out of an evacuated Iceland town for months

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP)

— People in southwest Iceland remained on edge Saturday, waiting to see whether a volcano rumbling under the Reykjanes Peninsula will erupt. Civil protection authorities said that even if it doesn't, it's likely to be months before it is safe for residents evacuated from the danger zone to go home.

The fishing town of Grindavik was evacuated a week ago as magma — semi-molten rock — rumbled and snaked under the earth amid thousands of tremors. It has left a jagged crack running through the community, thrusting the ground upward by 1 meter

(3 feet) or more in places.

The Icelandic Meteorological Office said there is a "significant likelihood" that an eruption will occur somewhere along the 15-kilometer (9-mile) magma tunnel, with the "prime location" an area north of Grindavik near the Hagafell mountain.

Grindavik, a town of 3,400, sits on the Reykjanes Peninsula, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) southwest of the capital, Reykjavik and not far from Keflavik Airport, Iceland's main facility for international flights. The nearby Blue Lagoon geothermal resort, one of Iceland's top tourist attractions, has been shut at least



This image taken with a drone shows cracks on the road next to a church in the town of Grindavik, Iceland, Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023.

Associated Press

until the end of November because of the volcano danger.

Grindavik residents are being allowed to return for five minutes each to rescue

valuable possessions and pets.

A volcanic system on the Reykjanes Peninsula has erupted three times since 2021, after being dormant

for 800 years. Previous eruptions occurred in remote valleys without causing damage.

Iceland sits above a volcanic hot spot in the North Atlantic and averages an eruption every four to five years. The most disruptive in recent times was the 2010 eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which spewed huge clouds of ash into the atmosphere and grounded flights across Europe for days because of fears ash could damage airplane engines.

Scientists say a new eruption would likely produce lava but not an ash cloud. □





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Oranjestad, Aruba – Casa del Mar, the premier name in vacation ownership, is thrilled to announce an offer that will redefine the way you experience vacations. Now, you can secure multiple consecutive weeks of ownership in the same suite at Casa del Mar with an exclusive 20% discount! This extraordinary opportunity allows you to indulge in extended, unforgettable getaways while enjoying all the benefits of ownership at Casa del Mar without having to change rooms during your stay!

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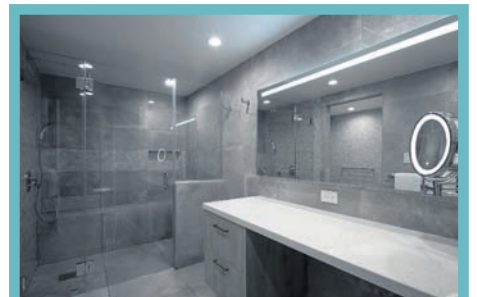
"This exclusive offer reflects Casa del Mar's commitment to providing new owners with the ultimate vacation experience," said Starr Ramos, Marketing, Communications, Activities & Members Relations Manager at Casa del Mar. "We understand that potential new owners value both flexibility and affordability, which is why we are thrilled to offer multiple consecutive weeks of ownership with a substantial 20% discount. It's our way of saying thank you for choosing Casa del Mar."

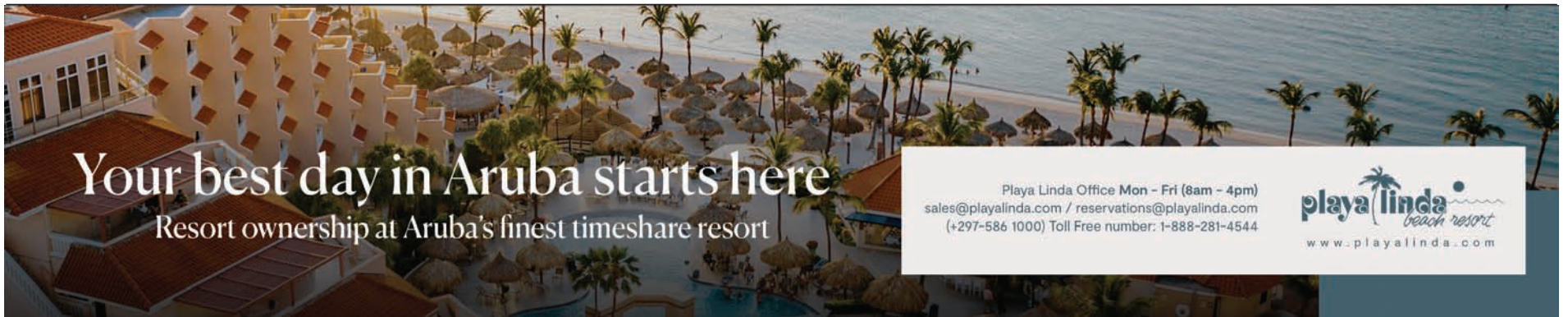
Don't miss out on this exceptional opportunity to own your vacation paradise. Casa del Mar invites you to discover the world of vacation ownership with unparalleled benefits.

For more information about Casa del Mar and this exclusive ownership opportunity, please visit www.casadelmararuba.com/inventory or contact our dedicated team at sales@casadelmararuba.com and

About Casa del Mar:

Casa del Mar is a premier luxury vacation ownership provider dedicated to delivering exceptional vacation experiences. With a commitment to quality, convenience, and value, Casa del Mar has become a trusted name in the industry, offering a lifetime of unforgettable vacations.





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Blackstone Beach



(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if

it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba: the stones that cover the beaches and the shape of it has been crafted for thousand years via volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach,

do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family!

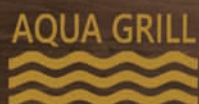


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Rhythms Circus Company Aruba: putting Aruba's name on the world stage

Rhythms Circus Company Aruba is a talented group of young people working daily to present their art in the form of acrobatics, dancing, acting and singing. After an impactful participation in one of America's biggest talent shows, they are now bringing their amazing talent to Aruba!



ple from various countries delights the audience with their artistic prowess at the Paseo Herencia Mall, every Wednesday and Friday starting at 7pm. Each day has a different show, so you can attend both nights for the complete experience!

In a show full of light, music, and with performances to famous musical figures like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson and Tina Turner, the group consisting of 15 peo-

RCCA also offers the possi-

bility for you and your family to enjoy dinner before the show! Starting from 6pm, you and your family can delight from the wide-ranged menu that includes a variation of delicious main course meals complete with a delectable flan dessert as a sweet treat. Enjoy your dinner even more at a VIP table complete with comfort seating!

The group, under the leadership of directors and creators Diego Jaramillo and Yamila Hernandez are opening the doors to the ballroom to our local audience as well as our visitors so that everyone can have the privilege of experiencing this wonderful show.

Hernandez explained that the idea for this project started in 2010 when she came to work in Aruba. After being on the island for a while she decided to stay and live here, and she met Diego Jaramillo, who is currently her partner. Together they came with the idea to establish a company together with other professional artists, with the goal of living from their art.



Hernandez says that the work is hard – all of the performers are professional artists, and while the production of the show is not a challenge for them, selling the idea proved difficult since at the time, there weren't any shows of its kind on the island.

America's Got Talent Currently they are offering a show with music, choreography and at the end, they have a shocking acrobatics ending, one that was seen by thousands of people around the world when the group travelled to Los Angeles in the United States to represent Aruba in America's Got Talent. Hernandez said that the show was very important for them to meet the pub-

lic present because people could experience this performance live and right before their eyes.

Their presentation in America's Got Talent "was incredible" and they were able to meet the jury and many other artists staying there for three months. But the exhaustion and physical toll was so great that Diego suffered an accident, and because of this, they had to cancel all future commitments.

Reservations and tickets To make a reservation to see this incredible display of creativity and acrobatics, scan the QR code which will take you directly to their website for a booking. To find more information about RCCA, please visit their Instagram page @rccaruba.



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Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.



The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing.

The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one



in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.



Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds

from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.



The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/>

Why Americans feel gloomy about the economy despite falling inflation and low unemployment

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation has reached its lowest point in 2 1/2 years. The unemployment rate has stayed below 4% for the longest stretch since the 1960s. And the U.S. economy has repeatedly defied predictions of a coming recession. Yet according to a raft of polls and surveys, most Americans hold a glum view of the economy. The disparity has led to befuddlement, exasperation and curiosity on social media and in opinion columns. Last week, the government reported that consumer prices didn't rise at all from September to October, the latest sign that inflation is steadily cooling from the heights of last year. A separate report showed that while Americans slowed their retail purchases in October from the previous month's brisk pace, they're still spending enough to drive economic growth.

Even so, according to a poll last month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, about three-quarters of respondents described the economy as poor. The disparity between the data and individual perceptions poses a political challenge for President Joe Biden as he gears up for his re-election campaign. Polls consistently show that most Americans disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy.

Many factors lie behind the disconnect, but economists increasingly point to one in particular: The lingering financial and psychological effects of the worst bout of inflation in four decades. Inflation may be slowing, but many goods and services are still far pricier than they were just three years ago. Lisa Cook, a member of the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors, captured this dynamic in recent remarks at Duke University.

"Most Americans," Cook said, "are not just looking for disinflation" — a slowdown in price increases. "They're looking for defla-



Workers apply sheathing to the exterior of a new multifamily residential building, Friday, Nov. 3, 2023, in the East Boston neighborhood of Boston.

Associated Press

tion. They want these prices to be back where they were before the pandemic. ... I hear that from my family."

That's particularly true for some of the goods and services that Americans pay for most frequently: Bread, beef and other groceries, apartment rents and utilities. Every week or month, consumers are reminded of how far those prices have risen.

Deflation — a widespread drop in prices — typically makes people and companies reluctant to spend and therefore isn't desirable. Instead, economists say, the goal is for wages to rise faster than prices so that consumers still come out ahead.

How inflation-adjusted incomes have fared since the pandemic is a complicated question, because it is difficult for just one metric to capture the experiences of roughly 160 million Americans.

Adjusted for inflation, median weekly earnings — those in the middle of the income distribution — have risen at just a 0.2% annual rate from the final three months of 2019 through the second quarter of this year, according to calculations

by Wendy Edelberg, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. That meager gain has likely left many Americans feeling that they have made little financial progress.

For Katherine Charles, a 40-year old single mother in Tampa, Florida, inflation's slowdown hasn't made it easier to make ends meet. Her rent jumped 15% in May. Over the summer, to keep her electricity bill down, Charles kept the air conditioning off during the day despite Tampa's blistering hot weather.

She has felt the need to cut back on groceries, even though, she said, her 16-year old son and 10-year old daughter "are at the age they are eating everything in front of them."

Charles, a call center representative with a company that handles customer service for the Medicare and

Affordable Care Act health plans, received a raise to \$18.21 an hour two years ago. But it wasn't much of an increase. She doesn't even remember how large it was.

Other factors also play a role in why many people are still unhappy with the economy. Political partisanship is one of them. With Biden occupying the White House, Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to characterize the economy as poor, according to the University of Michigan's monthly survey of consumer sentiment.

Karen Dynan, a Harvard economist who served in both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, noted that distinct swings in economic sentiment occur after a new president is inaugurated, with voters from the party opposed to the president

quickly switching to a more negative view.

"The partisan divide is stronger than it was before," she said. "Partly because the country is more polarized." At the same time, broad national data doesn't capture the experiences of millions of everyday Americans, many of whom haven't seen their wages keep up with prices.

"In real terms, most people are probably pretty close to where they were pre-pandemic," said Brad Hershbein, a senior economist at the Upjohn Institute. "But there are a lot of exceptions."

Lower-income Americans, for example, have generally received the largest percentage wage gains since the pandemic. Fierce competition for front-line workers at restaurants, hotels, retailers and entertainment venues forced companies to provide significant pay hikes.

But poorer people typically face a higher inflation rate, according to economic research, because they spend a greater proportion of their income on such volatile expenses as food, gas and rent — items that have absorbed some of the biggest price spikes. □

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24/7

New hardiness zone map will help U.S. gardeners keep pace with climate change

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
AP Science Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — Southern staples like magnolia trees and camellias may now be able to grow without frost damage in once-frigid Boston. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's "plant hardiness zone map" was updated Wednesday for the first time in a decade, and it shows the impact that climate change will have on gardens and yards across the country. Climate shifts aren't even — the Midwest warmed more than the Southeast, for example. But the map will give new guidance to growers about which flowers, vegetables and shrubs are most likely to thrive in a particular region.

One key figure on the map is the lowest likely winter temperature in a given region, which is important for determining which plants may survive the season. It's calculated by averaging the lowest winter temperatures of the past 30 years. Across the lower 48 states, the lowest likely winter temperature overall is 2.5 degrees (1.4 degrees Celsius) warmer than when the last map was published in 2012, according to Chris Daly, a researcher at Oregon State University's PRISM Climate Group, which collaborates with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service to produce the map.

Boston University plant ecologist Richard Primack, who was not involved in the map project, said: "Half the U.S. has shifted to a slightly warmer climatic zone than it was 10 years ago." He called that "a very striking finding."

Primack said he has noticed changes in his own garden: The fig trees are now surviving without extensive steps to protect them from winter cold. He has also spotted camellias in a Boston botanical garden and southern magnolia trees surviving the past few winters without frost damage. These species are all generally associated



Cherry blossoms and buds cover the trees in the Kenwood neighborhood of Bethesda, Md., Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

with warmer, more southern climates. Winter temperatures and nighttime temperatures are rising faster than daytime and summer temperatures, Primack said, which is why the lowest winter temperature is changing faster than the U.S. temperature overall. As the climate shifts, it can be tricky for plants — and growers — to keep up. "There are a lot of downsides to the warmer winter temperatures, too," said

Theresa Crimmins, who studies climate change and growing seasons at the University of Arizona and was not involved in creating the map. "When we don't have as cold winter temperatures, we don't have as severe die-backs of insects that carry diseases, like ticks and mosquitoes." She added that hotter, drier summers in some regions may kill plants that once thrived there. "You wouldn't want to plant

plants that aren't adapted right now for where you're living," she said. □

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David Montgomery's run caps Lions' rally past Bears for 31-26 win and 8-2 record

By The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — David Montgomery ran for a 1-yard touchdown with 29 seconds left against his former team, and the Detroit Lions rallied for a 31-26 victory over Justin Fields and the Chicago Bears on Sunday.

The NFC North-leading Lions (8-2) overcame four turnovers, including Jared Goff's season-high three interceptions, and a 12-point deficit over the last 3:06.

Detroit has its best record through 10 games since 1962, giving the franchise a shot to win a division title for the first time in three decades.

The Bears (3-8) blew chances to win consecutive games for the first time in nearly two years.

Fields mostly played well in his first game in a month, but he fumbled on his last snap when Aidan Hutchinson sacked him and the ball went out of the end zone for a safety.

Fields threw a 39-yard touchdown pass to DJ Moore late in the third quarter. Cairo Santos made two of his four field goals in the fourth quarter to give the Bears a 26-14 lead with 4:15 remaining.

Goff bounced back from a shaky start to complete 23 of 35 passes for 236 yards and a touchdown. Fields matched a career high with 18 carries and had 104 yards rushing. He was 16 of 23 for 169 yards with a touchdown.

BROWNS 13, STEELERS 10 CLEVELAND (AP) — Dustin Hopkins kicked a 34-yard field goal with 2 seconds left after rookie quarterback Dorian Thompson-Robinson completed four straight clutch passes, and Cleveland beat Pittsburgh. Making his second NFL start, Thompson-Robinson rallied the Browns (7-3) days after Deshaun Watson was lost for the season with a shoulder injury.

With the crowd chanting "D-T-R!" and Watson watching from Cleveland's sideline, Thompson-Robinson, a fifth-round pick from



Detroit Lions running back David Montgomery (5) runs in the endzone after his 1-yard rushing touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Chicago Bears, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, in Detroit.

Associated Press

UCLA, calmly completed his four passes for 39 yards to set up Hopkins.

The Browns have beaten the Ravens and Steelers (6-4) in consecutive weeks for the first time in 15 tries.

Pittsburgh was outgained for the 10th straight week and couldn't get much going against Cleveland's top-ranked defense. Jaylen Warren had a 74-yard TD run and finished with a career-high 129 yards for the Steelers.

Pittsburgh turned to its reliable defense in the second half and did a nice job shutting down Thompson-Robinson until the final moments. The Steelers had won each of their past nine games decided by eight points or fewer, including six this season.

COWBOYS 33, PANTHERS 10 CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — DaRon Bland tied an NFL record with his fourth pick-6 of the season, Dak Prescott

threw for 189 yards and two touchdowns, and Dallas trounced Carolina for its fourth win in five games.

Bland made a diving interception of Bryce Young near the sideline early in the fourth quarter, got up and raced 31 yards for a touchdown and a 30-10 lead. He tied a record shared by Philadelphia's Eric Allen (1993), Kansas City's Jim Kearney (1972) and Houston's Ken Houston (1971).

Tony Pollard ran for 61 yards and a touchdown, and CeeDee Lamb found the end zone again for Dallas (7-3) in front of a predominantly pro-Cowboys crowd.

Young was 16 of 29 for 123 yards, and the No. 1 draft pick threw the third pick-6 of his rookie season and also fumbled. The Panthers (1-9) are assured their sixth straight losing season since David Tepper bought the

team in 2018.

The Cowboys sacked Young seven times and limited the Panthers to 187 yards and 13 first downs in the first game since head coach Frank Reich resumed control of play-calling duties.

DOLPHINS 20, RAIDERS 13 MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Jalen Ramsey had two of Miami's three interceptions, including a pick in the end zone that put the game away with 22 seconds left, and the Dolphins overcame three turnovers of their own to beat Las Vegas.

With the Raiders driving toward a potential tying score, Ramsey intercepted a pass from rookie Aidan O'Connell intended for Tre Tucker, ending a rare game in which Miami's defense outshined its offense. Tua Tagovailoa went 28 of 39 for 325 yards with two touchdowns and an in-

terception for Miami. He also lost his third fumble of the season on a scramble on the Dolphins' opening drive. Tyreek Hill caught his league-leading eighth touchdown of the season and had 146 yards on 10 receptions.

The Dolphins (7-3) solidified their spot atop the AFC East. They finished with 422 yards of offense but scored their fewest points at home all year.

O'Connell also threw a pick on Las Vegas' penultimate drive. He finished 24 of 41 for 271 yards for the Raiders (5-6), who fell to 2-1 since coach Josh McDaniels was fired and replaced on an interim basis by Antonio Pierce.

In other NFL games it was Houston 21, Arizona 16; Green Bay 23, Los Angeles 20;

N.Y. Giants 31, Washington 19 and Jacksonville 34, Tennessee 14. □

Djokovic wins record 7th ATP Finals title by beating Sinner in straight sets

TURIN, Italy (AP) — Novak Djokovic ended the year just as he started it — by setting records.

The top-ranked Djokovic won a record-breaking seventh ATP Finals title on Sunday with a straight-set victory over home favorite Jannik Sinner.

Djokovic took 1 hour, 43 minutes to win 6-3, 6-3 as the Serbian continues to reach new heights at the age of 36.

He started 2023 with a record-extending 10th Australian Open title and went on to claim his 23rd Grand Slam singles trophy at the French Open, breaking Rafael Nadal's mark. Djokovic, who lost the Wimbledon final to Carlos Alcaraz, also won the U.S. Open.

"One of the best seasons I've had in my life, no doubt," Djokovic said. "To crown it with a win against a hometown hero in Jannik, who has played amazing tennis this week, is phenomenal."

Djokovic entered Sunday's final tied with Roger Federer on six titles at the season-ending tournament for the year's top eight players.

And he stretched out his arms and beamed broadly after clinching his seventh when Sinner double-faulted.

The victory had echoes of the clinical way Djokovic dispatched second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz in Saturday's semifinal encounter.

"I'm very proud of the performances these last two days against Alcaraz and Sinner, probably the best two players in the world next to me and (Daniil) Medvedev at the moment, and the way they have been playing I had to step it up," Djokovic said.

"I had to win the matches and not wait for them to hand me the victory and that's what I've done. I think I tactically played different today than I have in the group stage against Jannik, and just overall it was a phenomenal week."

It was his fourth win over Sinner, who had recorded a first-ever victory against



Serbia's Novak Djokovic kisses the trophy after winning the singles final tennis match of the ATP World Tour Finals at the Pala Alpitour, in Turin, Italy, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023.

Associated Press

Djokovic in the group stage in Turin and was the first Italian to reach the final.

But Djokovic was in imperi-

ous form on Sunday and won 14 straight points from the end of the first set to the third game of the second

to leave him firmly in control and subdue the Turin crowd.

Djokovic had already secured the year-end No. 1 ranking for a record-extending eighth time by winning his opening match at the ATP Finals.

After this tournament, Djokovic will become the first player to hold the No. 1 ranking for 400 weeks, with Roger Federer at 310 the only other man to eclipse the 300-week mark.

It was also only the second time in the last 15 years that a player has made the finals of all four Grand Slam tournaments and the ATP Finals. The only previous occasion was when Djokovic did it in 2015.

Sinner came into the final

having won all of his matches in Turin and backed by a fervent home crowd, who had dreams of him becoming the first Italian to win the tournament in its 54-year history.

But the 22-year-old Sinner could offer little in response to a master class from Djokovic, especially in a blistering first set that lasted just 38 minutes and saw the Serbian win 20 of 22 service points. Djokovic also served up 13 aces during the match.

"Congratulations to you (Novak) for this week and not only: you started the season by winning and you ended it by winning, you won three Slams and many other tournaments," Sinner said. □



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Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy

Calamari or the mouthwatering creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with choco-



late sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

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If you are planning a birthday dinner, here you will receive a nice bottle of champagne to take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

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Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

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Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all throughout the year, and hopefully will continue to do so in the years to come. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☐



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